



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
**CENTER CITY DEVELOPMENT  
 & OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT**

**Alamo Plaza Advisory Committee**

**MINUTES**

**Monday, September 15, 2014**

**10:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.**

**Central Library Auditorium**

Councilmember Diego Bernal	Tri-Chair	Present
Marise McDermott	Tri-Chair	Present
Sue Ann Pemberton, FAIA	Tri-Chair	Present
Howard Peak	1994 Alamo Plaza Study Committee Representative	Present
Ramon J. Vasquez	History/Archeology Representative	Present
Dr. Steve Tomka	History/Archeology Representative	Absent
Dr. Sharon Skrobarcek	History/Archeology Representative	Present
Larry L. Laine	State of Texas Designee	Absent
Mardi Arce	Federal Government Designee	Present
Frank Z. Ruttenberg	Private Property Owner Representative	Absent
Davis Phillips	Tourism Designee	Present
Roger Perez	District 1 Appointee	Present
Anthony Edwards	District 2 Appointee	Present
Patricia Mejia	District 3 Appointee	Absent
Rudolph F. Rodriguez	District 4 Appointee	Present
Gabe Farias	District 5 Appointee	Present
Rudi Rodriguez	District 6 Appointee	Absent
Ed Torres	District 7 Appointee	Present
Boone Powell, FAIA	District 8 Appointee	Present
Bill Brendel	District 9 Appointee	Present
Jack Judson	District 10 Appointee	Present

Others Present: Colleen Swain (CCDO), Sarah Esserlieu (CCDO), Mimi Quintanilla (Consultant, Facilitator), Shanon Miller (OHP), Kathy Rodriguez (OHP), Claudia Guerra (OHP), Jackie King (GLO), Pat Schneider (TCI), Carol Warkoczewski (TCI), Steve de la Haya (CVB), Xavier Urrutia (Parks)

**DISABILITY ACCESS STATEMENT**



All entrances to the San Antonio Central Library are accessible to persons with disabilities. Parking is available at the attached parking garage on Soledad Street. Auxiliary aids and services, including Deaf interpreters, must be requested forty-eight [48] hours prior to the meeting. For accessibility assistance, call (210) 207-7268 or 711 (Texas Relay Service for the Deaf).

1. **Welcome** by Colleen Swain and Marise McDermott at 10:09 a.m. Mimi Quintanilla noted items 3 and 4 of the agenda would be switched. She reviewed the ground rules, communications, and process (see attached slides 2-4).
2. **Discussion of Public Input and Commentary.** Mimi Quintanilla reviewed salient points from the August 26 public meeting. She highlighted general comments of support (in green) and general comments of concern (in red) from the public regarding the vision and guiding principles (see attached PowerPoint slides 5-12). In reviewing the vision statement, the committee decided against changing Vision Statement 4 because of the 11 marks of support (see attached slide 5). The committee agreed to quickly review all comments then go back and discuss them in depth. Under Theme A, Goal 2, the committee accepted the change to include ‘Missionary and Indian Towns.’

There was a discussion whether to include the role of slavery explicitly under Theme B, Goal 1 (see attached slide 10) or in the bullet points under Goal 1 because the fight for liberty only applied to free men, not to the enslaved African American population. The committee decided to include it in the bullet points. Under Theme C (see attached slide 11), the public expressed the need for the actions of honor and respect, not just ‘remembrance’ because ‘remembrance’ doesn’t require any action. The committee agreed the vision, guiding principles, and themes and goals need more clear and concise language to better communicate the committee’s intent. The committee discussed moving ‘self-determination and self-rule’ to Theme B from Theme C as part of the background to the Battle of the Alamo. The committee discussed how best to include the reasons all groups were fighting (including Tejanos, slaves, etc.) because the battle was not about self-determination for all involved. The committee noted the key phrase is ‘provide background and context for the fight’ and agreed to move self-determination, self-preservation, and self-rule to the bullet points below Goal 2 under Theme B.

The committee reviewed Theme D (see attached slide 12). While members of the public expressed concerns with Theme D, they listed nothing specific and were generally supportive of the goals. The committee discussed whether all pertinent groups were included in Theme A (see attached slide 9). Mimi Quintanilla raised the issue of including the role of African Americans in the themes and goals. The committee added it to Theme A (see attached slide 9). The committee discussed the general lack of support for Theme D but general support for the goals. They agreed the content of the theme is acceptable but the wording may be unclear.

The committee finished reviewing the general comments and went back to review the vision and guiding principles in more depth to incorporate public comments. The first guiding principle, ‘1836 is the entry point’ received more concern than support. There was a discussion on wording to more clearly explain that while the 1836 Battle of the Alamo is the story most people are familiar with, it could be the hook that provides the opportunity to tell the rest of the site’s story. The committee agreed to reword Guiding Principle 1 to the way it appears on attached slide 6.

Public feedback indicated that ‘evidence-based features’ was not a well-received phrase in Guiding Principle 3. The committee agreed to reword to ‘historical and archeological evidence’ for

clarification. The committee discussed including myth, oral tradition, legend, and folklore as part of the story and history. They agreed to add ‘folklore and myth’ to Guiding Principle 5.

The committee took a 10 minute break at 12:15 p.m.

The committee reconvened at 12:25 p.m. They reviewed and discussed the guiding principles (see attached slides 6-7). The committee discussed that healing would come from telling the accurate history as reflected in Guiding Principle 8. Mimi Quintanilla stated that ‘too many guiding principles’ appeared several times in the public comments. The committee discussed that environmental protections are common in modern building requirements, and the committee would not approve a plan that would create environmental harm. Furthermore, having a sustainable business model is already covered in Guiding Principle 2. Therefore, the committee agreed to eliminate Guiding Principle 6, which originally stated ‘Sustainability: social, economic and environmental impact.’ The committee agreed to the revised guiding principles.

The committee reviewed public comments about the themes and goals. Under Theme A, Goal 3 (see attached slide 9), the committee discussed the contributions various cultural groups made to the site. The committee agreed to enumerate the various groups in the bullet points under this goal in the final document. Under Theme C, the committee agreed to remove ‘provide context for the fight,’ as it is already covered under Theme B. Under Theme D, the committee made Goal 2 the theme statement and reworked the language of each goal for clarity. They discussed the history of the site and that visitors should be aware of the relationship the Alamo had to the rest of San Antonio at that time and why the city grew around the chapel. They discussed that Theme D must include the site’s continued role in the City of San Antonio. They added “and continues to be a community gathering place” to the theme statement and settled on the wording for the goals on attached slide 12.

3. **World Heritage Clarification:** Sue Ann Pemberton explained what the World Heritage designation would mean for the Alamo to correct misinformation brought up at the public meeting. She stated that World Heritage is an international program under the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that highlights important cultural properties deemed to have universal value. Inclusion on this list is very prestigious and boosts economic development and tourism, brings public awareness, and preserves the site. Designation provides access to the World Heritage Fund and technical assistance for site preservation.

She further elaborated that the UN has no oversight of the properties. All land ownership remains the same. The UN can make recommendations for preservation and conservation but does not require them. The only punitive action the UN can take is to remove the site from the list. The honorary designation provides a way for the UN to signal to the world that this place matters. There are currently 22 World Heritage sites in U.S. including Yosemite National Park, the Statue of Liberty, Taos Pueblo, and Independence Hall. Poverty Point in Louisiana was added in 2014. The UN flag does not fly over the Statue of Liberty or any of the 22 sites, many of which are managed by the National Parks Service. World Heritage status does not affect how these sites are managed in any way.



Sue Ann Pemberton continued to explain the World Heritage nomination is for the five missions together. Alamo Plaza is in the “buffer zone” of the site and is *not* part of the nomination. The buffer zone is not held to the same standard as what is within the actual nomination boundary. For this site, UNESCO is only considering the state-owned property for designation, not the plaza or surrounding areas. A UNESCO committee will vote on designating San Antonio’s missions in June 2015.

The committee discussed the 11,000 letters the Texas Nationalist Movement delivered at the public meeting. The World Heritage discussion is meant to address concerns expressed in this letter. The committee concluded they had addressed all other concerns through their discussions to date. Sue Ann Pemberton further elaborated that the State of Texas has a list of historic places as does the federal government. World Heritage is simply an international list that recognizes the missions.

A main concern is that the World Heritage designation would prohibit reconstruction of any aspect of the Alamo compound. Sue Ann Pemberton stated there are no restrictions for rebuilding anything at the site. If the community wants reconstruction and UNESCO disapproves of it, the only action they can take is to remove the missions from the World Heritage site list. The UN can take no further action. If such reconstruction were to happen, the Alamo is on an historic registry with City of San Antonio, State of Texas, and U.S. government, and each level of government has certain historic protections that would regulate the quality and type of construction. There are other UNESCO sites that have seen reconstruction – it is possible.

4. **Wrap-Up** Meeting ended at 1:50 pm.